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Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Joseph Horwedel
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SUBJECT: GREENBELT ALLIANCE'S
BAY AREA SMART GROWTH
SCORECARD

DATE: July 28, 2006

Approved

Date

7/31/06

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide
SNI: All

INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

The Greenbelt Alliance (GBA) recently published the *Bay Area Smart Growth Scorecard* <http://www.greenbelt.org/downloads/resources/smartgrowthscorecard/smartgrowthscorecard.pdf>. San Jose is ranked number two out of 101 Bay Area cities evaluated for their smart growth policies. The report also analyzes nine Bay Area counties based on smart growth criteria and includes a combined city and county analysis. The Greenbelt Alliance informed us that they distributed copies directly to the entire Council last month. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a short summary of the scorecard findings.

ANALYSIS

This is the first time that the Greenbelt Alliance, a nonprofit environmental and advocacy organization, has conducted an analysis of regional smart growth practices. The Greenbelt Alliance's goal is to help cities and counties adopt a comprehensive set of smart growth policies.

City of San Jose

The report ranks San Jose as the second most effective city out of the 101 Bay Area cities analyzed for successful smart growth policies, with an overall score of 69%. San Jose is also the only city of the three largest Bay Area cities that made it into the top 10 ranked cities.

Cities are evaluated on their success in the following smart growth policy areas: growth boundaries, park proximity, affordable housing, mixed-use development, density location, parking reductions and development standards. These smart growth policy areas are weighted

based on their relative importance in guiding smart growth. The evaluation focuses on measuring existing smart growth policies, not actual developments or the political will in each jurisdiction.

The *Scorecard* commends San Jose for taking a consistent approach to growth, and adopting key policies for park proximity, mixed-use development, density location and reduced parking standards. San Jose received the following scores for smart growth policies: 100% for growth boundary; 88% for park proximity; 25% for affordable housing; 93% for mixed-use development; 73% for development density; 73% for parking reduction; and 63% for development standards. The report states that: "San Jose illustrates the success a city can have through consistent effort across policy areas. The good policies in place are already transforming San Jose from an epicenter of sprawl to a more livable, walkable community."

While the report gives San Jose overall good marks, the criteria used to score jurisdictions on their affordable housing was not based on actual production, but rather on whether the locality had adopted certain policies. Cities received points if they had adopted inclusionary housing policies that target low income renters and buyers and had an affordable housing trust fund. In addition, points are added for cities that had a jobs-housing linkage ordinance requiring new commercial and industrial development to provide housing for the businesses' future workers, either by directly building the housing or by donating to an affordable housing fund. San Jose has made significant progress in the region creating affordable housing, however, this is not reflected in the report. San Jose only scored 25% in this category because the City does not have these specific policies.

Bay Area Cities

The report concludes that Bay Area cities could be doing much more to support smart growth, and should adopt stronger smart growth policies. Of the 101 cities surveyed, the report states that only 17 earned score of 50% or more. On average the cities score 34%, indicating that cities are only taking about one-third of the steps identified by the GBA to ensure smart growth. The report also concludes that while most cities in the region are encouraging mixed-use development, most do not have urban growth boundaries, park proximity policies, reduced parking or increased density policies.


Bay Area Counties

The *Scorecard* also evaluates nine Bay Area counties based on their success in the following smart growth policy areas: managing growth, permanently protecting open space, preserving agricultural land, conserving natural resources and offering transportation choices. It concludes that the counties on the whole, are doing somewhat better than cities. On average, they score 51%, indicating that they are doing half of what GBA determined could be done to promote smart growth. Santa Clara County was ranked sixth, out of nine counties (with a score of 54%), and achieved the following scores: 30% for growth management; 60% for open space protection;

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15% for agricultural protection; 50% for conservation planning; and 85% for transportation choices. Santa Clara County achieved the highest score among the nine counties in the area of transportation choices.


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